

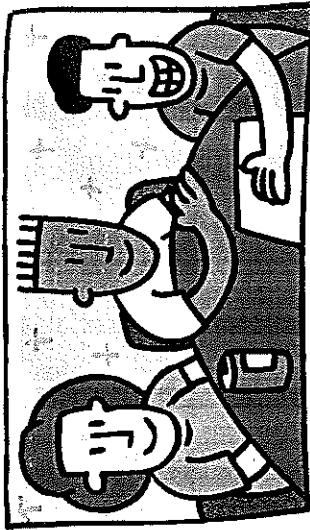
## **What is Restorative Justice?**

Restorative Justice is a philosophy that defines accountability as "repairing the harm" instead of simply "taking the punishment." When misbehavior or conflict occurs, a facilitator may offer to prepare and conduct a Restorative Justice "Conference." A Conference might occur informally in the classroom, or may be more formally scheduled to allow the inclusion of parents and other support people.

At the Conference, the student who caused the harm meets with those who were affected. The facilitator guides conference participants to discuss how they were affected by the incident and how they believe the harm should be repaired. A resolution plan is written and signed by everyone who participates. The plan may include things like apologies, direct service to the victims, financial restitution, counseling, or community service. Whatever is decided, the aim is always to "restore" harmony to the school, and to reintegrate victims

and offenders back into the school community.

Restorative Justice can address the emotional needs and tangible losses of the victims and hold young people accountable for their misconduct. Conferences allow students to better understand how their behavior affects others. Often, supportive communities are created for both the offending youth and those who were harmed. Studies show dramatic reductions in re-offending following Restorative Justice Conferences.



## **What Situations Can Be Referred to Restorative Justice Conferences?**

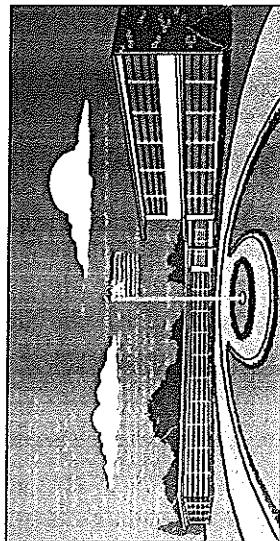
Many harm-producing incidents can be addressed by Restorative Justice Conferencing. School staff may suggest Conferencing for any violation of the student code that involves a victim who has been harmed physically, emotionally, and/or monetarily. When implementing this process, the administration may alter the customary disciplinary action that is stated in the Code of Conduct.

## **Steps to Initiating a Formal Restorative Justice Conference:**

- 1) The offending student is referred by a school administrator to Conferencing.
- 2) A trained facilitator contacts all affected parties, explains the process, and answers questions. Participation in a Conference is voluntary.
- 3) A Conference is scheduled.
- 4) During the Conference:
  - » The student who committed the act tells about the incident.
  - » Those who were harmed relate how they were affected.
  - » Everyone decides together how to repair the harm. A contract is written and signed.
  - » Empathy is fostered, and supportive interpersonal connections are made.
- 5) The facilitator monitors for contract compliance and reports to the principal.

## **Who Facilitates a Restorative Justice Conference?**

Restorative Justice Facilitators are school staff who have received professional training in preparing and leading a Restorative Justice Conference.

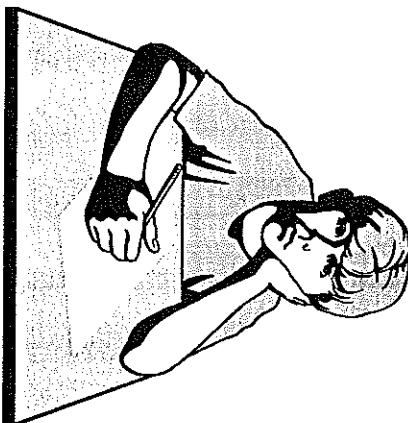


## Why Should I Participate in a Restorative Justice Conference?

- ☒ Students who have misbehaved are less likely to re-offend after meeting face to face with those they have affected. They feel relieved when they can do something to set things right. They become part of the solution, instead of "the problem."
- ☒ Those affected by the incident appreciate being able to say how they feel directly to the person who hurt or offended them, and they like having a say in the outcome. Conferencing gives them the opportunity to find closure and to move on from the incident.
- ☒ Parents of children who misbehave feel that Conferencing helps their children learn empathy and become better integrated into the school setting. They feel supported in disciplining their children.
- ☒ Victims are more likely to receive reparations like apologies, restitution, and reassurances that the hurtful behavior will stop. They often feel safer and less angry. They can put the matter behind them and move on.
- ☒ Families make connections and help each other solve difficult problems.
- ☒ Teachers and administrators appreciate working constructively with families to solve problems. They are glad when students can interact without conflict. They like the opportunity to model peaceful, democratic problem solving for students.

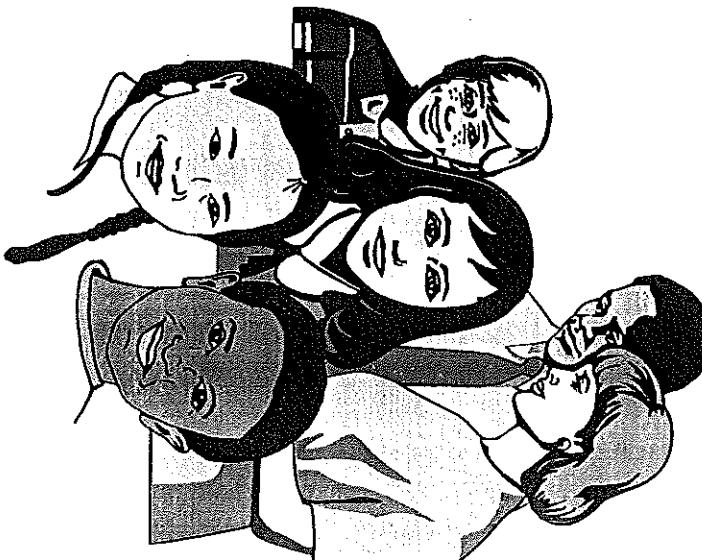
## The Common Approach to Problem Solving:

- ☒ Who did it?
- ☒ What rule was broken?
- ☒ What is the punishment?



## The Restorative Justice Approach to Solving Problems:

- ☒ What happened?
- ☒ Who was hurt or harmed?
- ☒ What needs to be done to repair the harm?



## Restorative Justice Using Conferencing to Resolve Conflict in Schools

**Bringing Students, Teachers, Parents, Administrators, and the Community Together to Resolve Problems, Promote Healing, and Transform Conflict.**

If you have questions regarding Restorative Justice or the Conferencing process, please contact your school office.